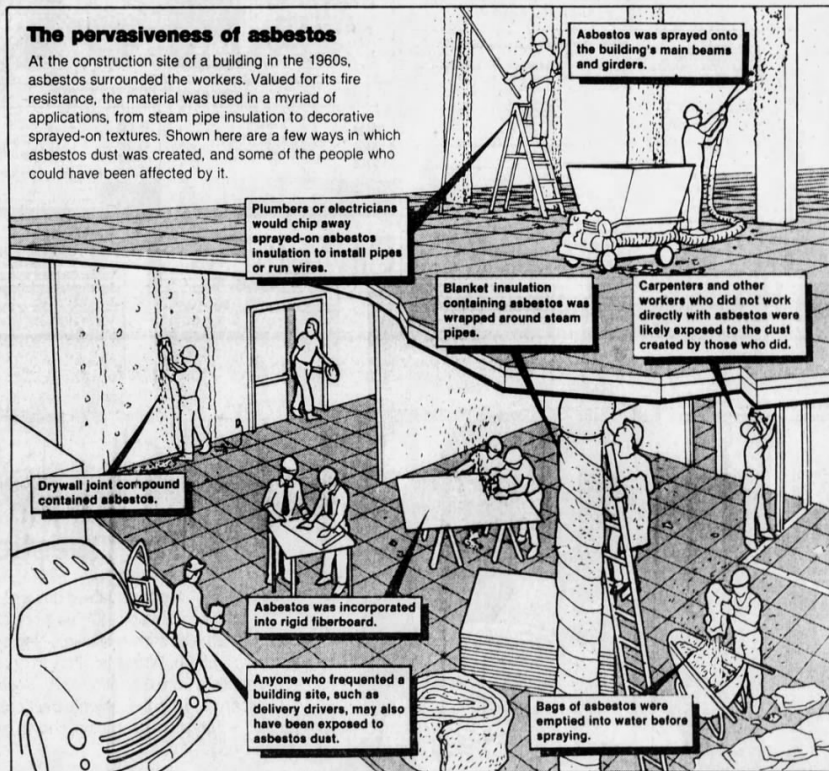


The pervasiveness of asbestos

At the construction site of a building in the 1960s, asbestos surrounded the workers. Valued for its fire resistance, the material was used in a myriad of applications, from steam pipe insulation to decorative sprayed-on textures. Shown here are a few ways in which asbestos dust was created, and some of the people who could have been affected by it.



THIS STORY HAS AN ERROR

CORRECTION PAGE FOLLOWS

Allen Dase Democrat and Chronicle

A rush for judgment

A new law finally grants victims of five toxic substances a day in court — but might clog N.Y.'s judicial system

By Steve Orr

Democrat and Chronicle

Seeking retribution for decades of perceived sins in the workplace, the marketplace and the environment, a host of New Yorkers — including hundreds in Rochester — are likely to take their grievances to court in coming months.

A long-awaited change in state law has given an unprecedented opportunity to citizens who have been disabled or harmed — and the survivors of those who have been killed — by exposure to five toxic substances.

The law will allow those people to seek monetary damages from the manufacturers of the products that caused the harm.

Most prominent among the substances are asbestos and the drug DES, or diethylstilbestrol.

Officials say the majority of the lawsuits will focus on asbestos, the widely used mineral fiber that has been found to cause cancer and debilitating respiratory problems whose symptoms usually do not manifest themselves until decades after first exposure.

An immense legal battle over asbestos, a once-common insulator and manufacturing additive, has raged for a decade in other states, where more liberal laws permitted exposed workers and

their lawyers to file some 40,000 lawsuits against asbestos manufacturers.

Asbestos researchers have predicted that tens or even hundreds of thousands of Americans will die as a result of past exposure to asbestos.

The lawyers of asbestos victims have based their liability claims on documents that indicate some manufacturers, led by industry giant Manville Corp., knew of the dangers decades ago but actively suppressed evidence of asbestos' devastating effects on human health.

"By the time it was disclosed, the damage was done," said William R. Urquhart, business manager of Heat and Frost Insulators and Asbestos Workers Union Local 26 in Rochester.

Urquhart, who is on disability because of respiratory problems related to asbestos exposure, said he is among about 40 asbestos workers' union members or survivors so far who have hired lawyers to file suit here.

"The terrible part of the whole thing is it destroys your mental well-being," said Urquhart, who said his father died of an asbestos-related lung problem and his two brothers also suffer from exposure to the fiber.

TURN TO PAGE 10A

'Toxic Tort' bill opens New York to a wave of lawsuits

By John Wiley
Special to the Chronicle

The action of the state Legislature last summer to reopen the courts to people injured by exposure to asbestos opened a Pandora's box for the state's legal system, bringing to New York for the first time a wave of litigation that has swamped courts in other states for a decade.

In the next nine months, anyone who discovered a disease related to asbestos, the drug DES or three other toxic substances — and whose claims were originally barred under the state's previous three-year statute of limitations — can file suit against the manufacturers of the material thought to have caused the disease.

By conservative estimates, several hundred lawsuits may be filed in Rochester alone between now and next July 31 — putting lawyers, their clients and the state's legal system in a terrible bind for time.

"The most I know about is the more I've fought over this one-year statute," said Rochester lawyer John F. Mahan, who hopes to handle as many as 100 of the cases.

Nationwide, more than 20,000 lawsuits have been filed against more than 250 manufacturers of asbestos, asbestos-related products, and asbestos-related products, and several have resulted in millions of dollars for the injured victims.

Mahan Corp., the nation's leading manufacturer of asbestos insulation products, filed for bankruptcy in 1982 even though it has never been prosecuted, citing the 10,000 lawsuits pending against it at the time.

MANVILLE ESTIMATED THAT at the time lawsuits were being filed — over 200 a month — the company could eventually face more than 20,000 cases and liability of more than \$1 billion. At least 100 asbestos-related lawyer claims Manville's executives were designed to discourage the company's.

At the heart of most of the suits is the contention that plaintiffs that Manville and the other major asbestos manufacturers were aware of the hazards of asbestos exposure at least as early as 1940 and deliberately concealed the information from their employees.

Mahan, who called Manville's actions the "prudent use of corporate ingenuity in litigation," worked with other members of the law firm of Foster, Stewart and Enery to bring the suits.

Secret and Enery are attorneys who have worked with other members of the law firm of asbestos victims in its effort to overcome what was the most difficult problem in asbestos litigation: how to sue a company that has been sued for decades.

Enery, Secret is among a number of local and out-of-town firms competing for asbestos cases. Secret and Enery are attorneys who have worked with other members of the law firm of asbestos victims in its effort to overcome what was the most difficult problem in asbestos litigation: how to sue a company that has been sued for decades.

Enery, Secret is among a number of local and out-of-town firms competing for asbestos cases. Secret and Enery are attorneys who have worked with other members of the law firm of asbestos victims in its effort to overcome what was the most difficult problem in asbestos litigation: how to sue a company that has been sued for decades.

Enery, Secret is among a number of local and out-of-town firms competing for asbestos cases. Secret and Enery are attorneys who have worked with other members of the law firm of asbestos victims in its effort to overcome what was the most difficult problem in asbestos litigation: how to sue a company that has been sued for decades.

Enery, Secret is among a number of local and out-of-town firms competing for asbestos cases. Secret and Enery are attorneys who have worked with other members of the law firm of asbestos victims in its effort to overcome what was the most difficult problem in asbestos litigation: how to sue a company that has been sued for decades.

Enery, Secret is among a number of local and out-of-town firms competing for asbestos cases. Secret and Enery are attorneys who have worked with other members of the law firm of asbestos victims in its effort to overcome what was the most difficult problem in asbestos litigation: how to sue a company that has been sued for decades.

Enery, Secret is among a number of local and out-of-town firms competing for asbestos cases. Secret and Enery are attorneys who have worked with other members of the law firm of asbestos victims in its effort to overcome what was the most difficult problem in asbestos litigation: how to sue a company that has been sued for decades.

Enery, Secret is among a number of local and out-of-town firms competing for asbestos cases. Secret and Enery are attorneys who have worked with other members of the law firm of asbestos victims in its effort to overcome what was the most difficult problem in asbestos litigation: how to sue a company that has been sued for decades.

Enery, Secret is among a number of local and out-of-town firms competing for asbestos cases. Secret and Enery are attorneys who have worked with other members of the law firm of asbestos victims in its effort to overcome what was the most difficult problem in asbestos litigation: how to sue a company that has been sued for decades.

Enery, Secret is among a number of local and out-of-town firms competing for asbestos cases. Secret and Enery are attorneys who have worked with other members of the law firm of asbestos victims in its effort to overcome what was the most difficult problem in asbestos litigation: how to sue a company that has been sued for decades.

Enery, Secret is among a number of local and out-of-town firms competing for asbestos cases. Secret and Enery are attorneys who have worked with other members of the law firm of asbestos victims in its effort to overcome what was the most difficult problem in asbestos litigation: how to sue a company that has been sued for decades.

Enery, Secret is among a number of local and out-of-town firms competing for asbestos cases. Secret and Enery are attorneys who have worked with other members of the law firm of asbestos victims in its effort to overcome what was the most difficult problem in asbestos litigation: how to sue a company that has been sued for decades.

Enery, Secret is among a number of local and out-of-town firms competing for asbestos cases. Secret and Enery are attorneys who have worked with other members of the law firm of asbestos victims in its effort to overcome what was the most difficult problem in asbestos litigation: how to sue a company that has been sued for decades.

Enery, Secret is among a number of local and out-of-town firms competing for asbestos cases. Secret and Enery are attorneys who have worked with other members of the law firm of asbestos victims in its effort to overcome what was the most difficult problem in asbestos litigation: how to sue a company that has been sued for decades.

Enery, Secret is among a number of local and out-of-town firms competing for asbestos cases. Secret and Enery are attorneys who have worked with other members of the law firm of asbestos victims in its effort to overcome what was the most difficult problem in asbestos litigation: how to sue a company that has been sued for decades.

Enery, Secret is among a number of local and out-of-town firms competing for asbestos cases. Secret and Enery are attorneys who have worked with other members of the law firm of asbestos victims in its effort to overcome what was the most difficult problem in asbestos litigation: how to sue a company that has been sued for decades.

HOW TO GET HELP FOR TOXIC EXPOSURE

- 1. If you have a disease discovered before July 30 that you believe could have been caused by exposure to asbestos, here's what you can do:
 - Don't wait. Time is important. There are only nine months left to file a lawsuit.
 - Ask your doctor to refer you to an occupational health specialist or a pulmonologist trained to identify occupational lung diseases.
 - If you don't already have a lawyer, call the Monroe County Bar Association's Lawyer Referral Service at 644-2100 to get one. If you have a family lawyer, ask to be referred to a lawyer who can handle occupational personal injury claims.
 - If you belong to a labor union, ask your union for information about occupational diseases in your line of work.
- 2. Give people suffering from illnesses caused by the exposure to asbestos, the drug DES, the pesticide aldrin, dieldrin, chlordane (PVC) and the coolant from tungsten carbide — and who discovered their disease before July 30, 1982 — one year from that date to file a lawsuit.

UNDER THE STATE'S legal system before July 30, lawsuits by those people would have been barred because the statute of limitations prevented lawsuits from being filed more than three years after an injury.

In July, the Legislature changed that. In a move that Rochester lawyer Robert Cohen called a "radical change" in the law, legislators changed the law to start the statute of limitations from the date of discovery of an illness caused by any hazardous substance.

But the lawmakers also added a one-year "revival" clause that temporarily makes the law retroactive, giving people whose injuries were discovered before the law took effect one year to file a lawsuit to recover damages.

The revival, though, applies only to injuries caused by exposure to asbestos, the drug diethylstilbestrol (DES), the pesticide chlordane, the plastic polyvinyl chloride (PVC) and the metal compound tungsten carbide.

Lawsuits under the revival clause must be filed within a year of July 30, 1982, the date Gov. Mario Cuomo signed the so-called Toxic Tort bill into law.

Harter, Secret and Enery is representing members of the Union of Heat and Frost Insulation and Asbestos Workers Local 26. The union's members were responsible for much of the direct handling of asbestos — and thus have perhaps the highest incidence of asbestos disease among Rochester residents.

BUT CONSTRUCTION WORKERS in many areas have also been exposed to asbestos and are likely suffering from asbestos-related diseases today. Mahan's firm has bought a small computer to help lawyers decide when to sue, the worst problem he faces in making the July 30 deadline.

Entered into the computer are data from contracts, personal records of the union and every reliable memory from union members about what projects they worked on when construction sites started.

Once the information is assembled, Mahan said, the computer can be used to make comparisons to determine what projects a given individual was exposed to.

While that is a mammoth job for the members of the

asbestos workers union, Mahan said, the problems increase markedly with workers in other trades. Asbestos workers at one time or another were probably exposed to most kinds of asbestos, Mahan said.

But proving what products workers in other trades may have been exposed to will be more difficult.

"Proving the electricians' cases is going to rely on the asbestos workers' cases, and the records of the asbestos workers union, when asbestos was being used as a given job," Mahan said.

Mahan said his firm has so far advised the time of these lawsuits and two legal assistants to work full time on asbestos litigation, and more lawyers will be added later if necessary.

Mahan's firm faces a high probability of success based on the record of injured workers in other states.

IN A STUDY OF 122 asbestos lawsuits done by Jury Verdict Research Inc., an Ohio-based company that analyzes jury awards, 89 percent of the plaintiffs who filed suit against asbestos manufacturers won their cases. Verdicts in those 122 cases ranged from \$1,000 to \$600,000 and awards averaged \$112,244 in cases of chronic injury and \$28,128 when the plaintiff died as a result of his illness.

Most asbestos cases do not proceed to trial, however, but are settled out of court, lawyers said. They said that the reason for this is that the plaintiffs' attorneys have been trying asbestos

cases for many years, New York courts will have to hear many of occupational cases of disputed injury. State Supreme Court Justice Joseph G. Frisch, who presides over the 14th Judicial District, said the asbestos cases will be handled just as any other cases that come before the court.

"All the other situations, we'll have to take them as they come," Frisch said. "We don't think we can control over that."

He said, however, that the increased number of pending cases will mean cases of the eight judges in the district will be a heavy load.

It is possible, Frisch said, that he could assign one or two judges to handle asbestos cases, but that if the caseload were to grow high enough, that would be a last resort.

"How it affects the courts depends on how many out-of-court settlements you get," said Lewis F. Minterman, a member of another local law firm, Chamberlain, 17-A Seneca, Rochester and Greece, field, that intends to handle a number of cases.

HEALTH PROBLEMS FROM asbestos exposure and the resulting lawsuits are not limited just to the labor side of the labor-management equation.

"None of our employees have the same problem. I know of three management people who have some asbestos-type problem in their lungs," said William E. Urquhart, business manager of the asbestos workers union in Rochester.

Urquhart, he said, "made a point of letting the contractors know they won't be used" to help get their cooperation in determining which products were used in which buildings.

Under state law, a worker cannot sue his immediate employer because of health problems caused by on-the-job conditions. That is one reason suits focus on manufacturers of the products.

Urquhart said there are six Asbestos Workers health around the state, in New York City, White Plains, Albany, Syracuse, Rochester and Buffalo. "We all have programs in place. We all have programs in place," he said.

Urquhart said that the New York Public Interest Research Group, a Ralph Nader-inspired citizens lobby, is representing 100 to 150 New York workers who were harmed by asbestos and are eligible to file lawsuits during the one-year window.

"This is going to be highly lucrative" for the law firms that handle the cases, Urquhart said. The firm currently has 20 percent of awards.

"All the law firms think this is going to be easy. They're going to have to show the premature cause — that these people had the exposure."

"Secondly, the matter of medical knowledge, of course, is going to have to be applied, which is not very simple."

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

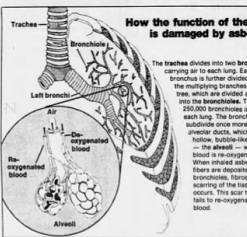
Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.



Toxic-substance victims get chance

By John Wiley
Special to the Chronicle

Next week, Urquhart's mother is to be sentenced for health problems due to her exposure to asbestos in the past and thus are eligible to file suit, though the

state's Health Department recorded 20 deaths from asbestosis due to one disease, asbestos, in the 10 years ending last year.

The state Workers Compensation Board approved compensation awards in 14 asbestos cases, including 14 deaths, between 1979 and 1984.

The number of people who have contracted one or more of the diseases related to asbestos is not known.

"The number of (illnesses and deaths) are really being handled about. But nobody knows. We're passing in the dark," said Dr. Carl Stein, an occupational medicine specialist at the University of Rochester Medical Center. Stein has one of the top occupational health practices in the city.

Statistics compiled by the local asbestos workers union demonstrate the mineral fiber's potency.

Since the May 19, 19 of 181 union members have died of lung cancer. At least eight of them died of lung cancer, which is almost always fatal.

Twelve living union members have lung cancer or other serious lung diseases, and asbestos-related scarring of the membrane around the lungs or respiratory problems.

"It wouldn't be unusual for any trade to be exposed to it. You're working in the same building," said Gordon Rochester, business manager of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 26.

Urquhart, of the asbestos workers union, remembers occasions when he was employed as an insulator on building construction sites where asbestos mixed with water was sprayed in huge quantities on girders and ceilings, a common way of insulating.

On the particular job site, a large downtown building erected in the 1950s,

the sprayed insulation filled the air to the point where he could hardly see the glow of a light bulb hanging from the ceiling above. When the work was done, Urquhart said, the floor was covered with 2 or 3 inches of dust.

"It was all over, so you couldn't escape it," he said. "It was probably the worst thing that ever happened in the construction industry."

A number of unions are organizing and pushing for health screenings and other efforts to find asbestos-related injuries or deaths among their members and others.

"That's what we're working on but we haven't got it yet — to go through our death records to see who died from what," said Bob Rosen, business manager of Local 420 of the Laborers International Union of North America.

Stein, the UR doctor, said he is involved in several studies to assess the incidence of asbestos-related disease locally. Urquhart estimated that about 30 to 60 members, former members or survivors of members of his union have been exposed to asbestos.

HE SAID HE expected members of non-union workers, especially in the construction industry, to be exposed to asbestos in the past.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Urquhart said that the compensation for the law firms or doctors, many plaintiffs in the lawsuits have been paid for the past several years.

Kodak did not identify its former employees who had died of asbestos or other asbestos-related diseases in a 12-year period stretching back to the early 1970s. The company has a health surveillance program for those who worked with asbestos, he said.

In addition to construction workers, those in other occupations may have been exposed to asbestos.

Factory workers are one category. Workers in the Three plants owned by Occidental Chemical Co. in Niagara Falls, for instance, previously used 10 million pounds of asbestos a year to reinforce plastic, officials said.

It is not known whether any plants in the Rochester area used large amounts of asbestos.

The use of asbestos has declined dramatically since the early 1970s, both in insulation and in industrial settings. State health officials say their records indicated 927 New York workers at 70 facilities used asbestos in 1984 in factories, and many of those uses do not involve direct exposure to the fiber.

Exposure to significant amounts of asbestos could have occurred in other occupations, officials say. One is auto maintenance, where mechanics — particularly those who work with asbestos-bearing brake linings — may be at risk.

Norman Melnick, industrial hygiene supervisor for the Federal Occupational Health and Safety Administration in Buffalo, said his office has received a few complaints about asbestos from mechanics but never found any unsafe levels in the shops or garages.

SOME SUGGEST THAT art teachers who formerly used asbestos-bearing materials in the classroom might be susceptible to asbestos-related illness. So too might be firefighters who have done as-

bestos-laden walls and ceilings in the course of extinguishing fires, according to Paul D'Amico, president of the Rochester Fire Fighters Association.

Soldiers have been a potential source for such remarkable qualities as asbestos — and asbestos has been known to be used in the military for decades.

Asbestos is a generic name for a number of related silicate minerals that form crystalline into fibers. The minerals are mixed in many forms of asbestos, even around the world.

For centuries, asbestos has been valued because the fibers can be woven and molded while retaining flexible or can be included in hardened boards, tiles or bricks.

Best of all, asbestos fibers are nearly impervious to heat and cold. Asbestos has been used in an enormous number of products, including many forms of insulation used on pipes, boilers and buildings.

Early research on asbestos-related diseases was not widely disseminated. It was not clear that exposure to asbestos could cause a variety of illnesses, though some forms of asbestos — including the most commonly used type, chrysotile — may be less potent than others.

One disease is asbestosis, in which fibers become imbedded in the lungs and cause scarring. The scars impede the absorption of oxygen into the blood.

The condition usually does not occur until 20 or more years after first exposure. It can get progressively worse even after exposure ceases and often proves fatal.

Asbestos also can cause lung cancer. If the exposed person smokes cigarettes, the likelihood of lung cancer is greatly increased.

PERHAPS THE MOST feared asbestos-related ailment is mesothelioma, a rare cancer of the lining of the chest and stomach cavities. Mesothelioma, which is routinely fatal six months or a year after onset, is largely associated with people who have been exposed to asbestos, even in small amounts.

"They've had cases where people worked a few hours or a few months and, 35 years later, they're got it," Urquhart said.

The fibers also can cause thickening or other tissue abnormalities in the pleura, the membrane surrounding the lungs.

Exposure to asbestos also is suspected of causing some forms of gastrointestinal cancer, according to Allen Stark, director of environmental epidemiology and occupational health at the state Health Department.

Stein, the UR doctor, said asbestos and some other diseases are difficult to diagnose and can be overlooked by general practitioners, who often do not ask about occupation and fail to make the link.

Radiologic without special training also may overlook the tell-tale signs of asbestos disease on chest X-rays, he said.

CORRECTION

William R. Urquhart, an Asbestos Workers union official who was quoted in a story in the *Sunday Democrat* and *Chronicle* about asbestos litigation, is not on disability. Although Urquhart said his health has suffered from exposure to asbestos, he is not receiving any disability payments.

CORRECTION

William R. Urquhart, an Asbestos Workers union official who was quoted in a story in the *Sunday Democrat and Chronicle* about asbestos litigation, is not on disability. Although Urquhart said his health has suffered from exposure to asbestos, he is not receiving any disability payments.